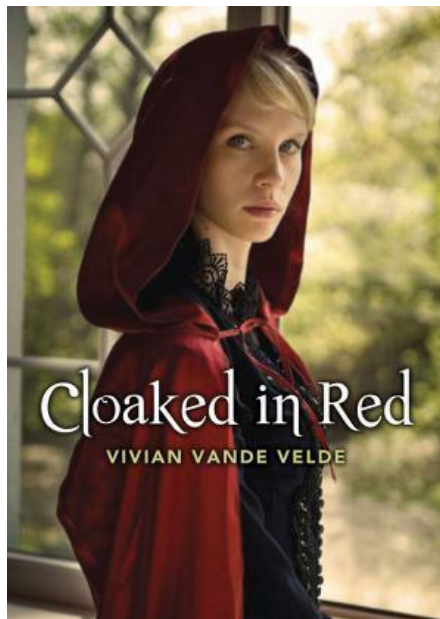




Cloaked in Red

Vivian Vande Velde

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So you think you know the story of Little Red Riding Hood, the girl with the unfortunate name and the inability to tell the difference between her grandmother and a member of a different species? Well, then, try your hand at answering these questions: Which character (not including Little Red herself) is the most fashion challenged? Who (not including the wolf) is the scariest? Who (not including Granny) is the most easily scared? Who is the strangest (notice we're not "not including" anyone, because they're all a little off.)? Who (no fair saying "the author") has stuffing for brains? Master storyteller Vivian Vande Velde crafts eight new stories involving one of the world's most beloved (and mixed-up) characters in literature. You may never look at fairy tales in quite the same way again.

Cloaked in Red Details

Date : Published February 7th 2012 by Amazon Children's Publishing (first published October 1st 2010)

ISBN :

Author : Vivian Vande Velde

Format : Kindle Edition 130 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Fairy Tales, Young Adult, Short Stories, Retellings, Fairy Tale Retellings

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From Reader Review Cloaked in Red for online ebook

Anne Osterlund says

Red Riding Hood was once a young lady who . . .

-Was so ashamed of the cloak her mother had dyed red that the girl felt compelled to sneak around the edge of town in wolf-infested woods.

-Wanted a child so badly that she designed her own life-size child doll.

-Had to deliver her grandmother's dinner because her father was afraid to go over to Grandma's house. It being a full moon and all.

-Found her neighbors Willy and Jacob extraordinarily annoying.

-had absolutely no common sense. And was darn lucky that her cloak was brilliant.

Etc.

Vivian Vande Velde brings her quirky humor and gifted storytelling to the tale of Red Riding Hood. Eight different versions. None any more realistic than the original. Many of them every bit as entertaining.

Cara says

Have you ever thought that the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* was kind of lame? If so this is the book for you.

The author in the beginning gives an introduction of why she felt the need to give this fairy tale it's due. To be honest I always thought the story was boring and definitely left a lot to be desired. Here we have a collection of stories that give a new take to Little Red. The stories range from a creepy doll coming to life, all the way to a red cloak having a mind of it's own. Some are comical and others ironic. A good array of different perspectives are presented here.

I'm usually horrible with short stories. I always need more and still feel like that most of the time. It would have been interesting to see a full-fledged novel with one of the ideas. It would be hard to do though. A lot of backstory would have to be done. Regardless of that I did enjoy the book and feel better about the story. After reading this I will absolutely be reading more from Vivian Vande Velde.

Lauren Koerner says

Though this book was good, it wasn't great. Would I pay 15 dollars for it? Nah. Would I pay 5 bucks for it? Yeah, probably.

Ms. Patterson says

When I pick up a Vivian Vande Velde book, I know I'm going to be reading something that takes a unique view on a familiar theme, plot or idea. CLOAKED IN RED is no exception, being a collection of short stories, all based on the traditional fairy tale of Little Red Riding Hood. I loved the subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) humor and jokes written into the stories, primarily related to the traditional Little Red Riding Hood tale or other fairy tales or even the Grimm brothers. If the reader isn't familiar with these stories, some of that humor may be lost on them. Most of the stories in this collection are extremely short and that's probably my biggest complaint. I wanted more. More details, more descriptions, more background, more story. I know, these are short stories based on a short fairy tale, but I've become so spoiled with all the novels published recently based on fairy tales.

While I love a couple of these stories, overall it's just average fare. That's why I give this story collection a C. I'd recommend this only to those that love reading retold fairy tales.

Arminzerella says

Vivian Vande Velde, in her introductory author's note, explains that the story of "Little Red Riding Hood" is not actually great literature. Good stories have memorable characters (no one in Little Red Riding Hood even has a name), vivid settings (the woods and grandma's house just don't cut it), an exciting plot (there's some suspense surrounding Red's interaction with the wolf, but the woodcutter – in versions where there is a woodcutter – just appears out of nowhere), and important themes (what can we learn from Little Red Riding Hood?). So she's written 8 new versions of the story. There's the Red who meets an unsavory woodcutter and is saved by a wolf, the seamstress who makes herself a cloth daughter with a red cloak (who then runs off with a posse of boys), the Red whose grandmother is really a werewolf, the grandma who would rather have a guardian wolf than an greedy husband, the nearsighted woodgatherer who messes up a bunch of fairytales by trying to help people, a couple of brothers Grimm who fight off a stuffed wolf, a wolf with a headache, and the Red with the fairy godmother who accidentally enchants her cloak. Most of these short stories have entertaining and unexpected twists that will have readers in stitches. My favorite part is still the introduction.

Excerpt:

"...they all start with a mother who sends her daughter into the woods, where there is not only a wolf, but a talking, cross-dressing wolf. We are never told Little Red Riding Hood's age, but her actions clearly show that she is much too young, or too dimwitted, to be allowed out of the house alone.

"But, apparently Little Red's mom hasn't noticed this...

"How would you feel if your parents called you 'Little Blue-Plaid Catholic School Uniform' or 'Little Green Sweatshirt with the Hole at the Elbow?'

"And what happened later in life, when Little Red Riding Hood was no longer little? Did she shift to 'Medium-Sized-Blue-Beaded Sweater?' Did she eventually become 'Size-Large and Yes-That-DOES-Make-Your-Butt-Look-Enormous Jeans?'

"However you look at it, 'Little Red Riding Hood' is a strange and disturbing story that should probably not be shared with children.

“That is why I’ve gone ahead and written eight new versions of it.” (from the Author’s Note)

L13 Tracy Beling says

This book is a collection of eight different stories that follow the story frame of Little Red Riding Hood. At the beginning of the book, the author provides a relatively long, humorous explanation of her annoyance with fairy tales. "I don't like to criticize anyone's family, but I'm guessing these people are not what you'd call close. Little Red doesn't realize a wolf has substituted himself for her grandmother. I only met my grandmother three times in my entire life, but I like to think I would have noticed if someone claiming to be my grandmother had fur, fangs, and a tail." She describes thoughts you might have if you approached fairy tales from a logical perspective.

In one her stories, Meg outsmarts a nasty woodcutter from abducting her, and the wolf aids her in getting rid of him. In another story, the wolf is a friendly animal just trying to help a little girl that dropped her basket in fright. He can't understand human language and she can't understand him. He ends up trying his best to help her out, but it just leads to more trouble and misunderstandings. Yet another retelling is about Roselle and her magic as she goes to visit her grandmother, who happens to be a werewolf, and the vampire woodsman who tries to attack her.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading all the stories, and I was entertained by all the different twists and turns the author was able to work into them. This is a book for young adults and should not be read to those younger. Because of the topic and length of the stories, I think this would be a great book for reluctant readers. The fact that it mocks the classic fairy tale would be appealing to someone that doesn't have much interest in reading. It could also be used as a mentor text to help students create their own versions of classic tales.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

Quite honestly, I liked the idea of this collection more than I liked the stories. I did appreciate the humor and the fact that Velde did address the issues she'd always had with the Little Red Ridinghood story in its varied incarnations. I actually agree with her on many points. However, I think a few of the stories took a bit too much of a left turn. One even goes into a direction that makes the Woodsman into a foil who complicates the storylines of several other fairy tale protagonists. Clever touch, but I was annoyed with the man, honestly. I really liked the story from the viewpoint of Red's grandmother who makes friends with the wolf in an intriguing way. I have a soft spot for wolves, so I rather liked that the wolf wasn't necessarily the villain in most of the stories. The last story was a fun touch about Red's cloak being sentient. Overall, Red doesn't come off in a very flattering way. But I think that's kind of the point of things. Clearly Velde doesn't think the traditional fairy tale treats Red as the smartest or most interesting character anyway.

The narrator really kicks this up a notch. She makes the story fun with her different voices and intonations. I felt like she had fun reading this book. That's always a good thing.

Overall, this was a fun audiobook, but it isn't nearly my favorite when it comes to fairy tale retellings. However, if you are a fairy tale freak like me, you'd probably want to check it out.

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

This was a nice, short book of Red Riding Hood stories. And I have to say no wolves were killed in this book or else I would set fire to those people! =)

Okay on with the stories:

The Red Cloak

This story is about Meg who is sent out to her granny's house but she spies a wolf on the way. She keeps going even though she is terrified and then she runs into a woodsman that is doing some illegal chopping of trees. She asks him to help her but then he turns all menacing and she does some things to sic the wolf on him. Let's just say he spends a lot of time up the tree's that belong to the King. And Little Red skips merrily away! lol

The Red Riding Hood Doll

This story was a little creepy. Georgette was a seamstress in her mother's shop. One day after dealing with a horrible customer, Georgette decides to make herself a life size doll. Her mother wasn't happy about this and told her she would take it out of her wages. Georgette loved her little girl doll, she always wanted a child of her own and now she does in a way. She even has a little red cloak. After spending the night in the woods with her doll, she is awakened by the woodsmen to find out her doll came to life. I was hoping it was going to be more creepy but it wasn't so this was my least favorite story.

Little Red Riding Hood's Family

This is a story of Roselle who has to take supper to her granny because her mom sprained her ankle. Roselle's father was afraid of granny because she had a temper. This is one of my favorite stories because granny is not what she seems but Roselle isn't either =)

Granny and the Wolf

In this story the granny, Nelda, is out in the woods one day and she finds a wolf in a trap that she saves. She takes the shite trap away as well. She tends to the wound and the wolf decides to follow her home and stay with her. Then of course everyone and their brother's uncle shows up to visit and she has to keep trying to hide the wolf. But, after getting rid of everyone she ends up telling Scarlet. She took the news well and they decided the wolf would be enough protection for granny out in the woods alone. So all three of them sat down and ate apple tarts and friend chicken =)

Deems the Wood Gatherer

There was an old wood gatherer named Deems. He was partially blind and he kept coming upon different people in the woods. Or so he thought. He tried to give each of them sound advice because he loved to help people. I thought this one was pretty cool because he runs into the wolf and the three pigs, the gingerbread

man, and hansel, gretel and the witch.

Why Willy and His Brother Won't Ever Amount to Anything

This is the story of Isolda, she has a bunch of brothers and sisters and they all live with her parents in the apple orchard.

This story is just bizarre and not one of my favorites, but the brothers that seem dumb as stumps end up being The Brothers Grimm.

The Little Red Headache

One day a wolf is having a nice nap when someone steps on his tail. Of course it hurt and he jumps up to find a little girl and she screams so loud it gives him a headache. She runs away and leaves her basket, he tries to yell to her but it came out all wolfy and scared her more. So, being the nice wolf that he is, he takes the basket to the granny's house and tells her what happened but she screams and then the little girl shows up and there is more screaming. Eventually the wolf runs away thinking they are all crazy!

Little Red Riding Hood's Little Red Riding Hood

That's a long title. Anyway, there is this really bratty girl that is actually a fairy godmother and she is always complaining about everything! She hates her cloak but can only use magic once a day.

The fairy godmother was visiting the little baby, Ruby Marie and since she hated the cloak so much she gave it to the baby and accidentally put a spell on the cloak to make it smart instead of the child.

Years later, Ruby Marie's mom asks her to go see her granny because she was sick. The cloak was not happy at all because of germs and Ruby Marie wasn't either because she was a brat.

On the way there they run into a wolf and the cloak keeps trying to help her get away, almost strangling her. They finally get to the house where the wolf was hiding. The cloak kept trying to strangle her and then strangle the wolf. Ruby threw the cloak off and said she hated it basically and wished the fairy godmother never gave it to her. A woodman passing heard all of the yelling and the wolf jumped out the window before he got caught. Ruby told the woodsman he scared off her granny but granny was in the wardrobe. Ruby wouldn't believe it though and the cloak had enough, so it ran away too (well slithered away) It had many owners through the years but later on . . . it found its true owner =)

Obviously, the last one was my favorite!

This was a cute little book and it's on kindle unlimited right now if anyone wants to read it!

MY BLOG: [Melissa Martin's Reading List](#)

Small Review says

Vivian Vande Velde is one of the most underrated storytellers out there. I adore her books! While her novels are my favorites, she is also a master at crafting a good short story (a rare skill, I find). Cloaked in Red is no

exception. With her signature dry wit, VVV has managed to create eight distinct and highly original versions of the, admittedly, rather strange original tale.

Before she begins, VVV treats the reader to a hilarious and sarcastic summary and deconstruction of the original story, complete with explanations on a number of different versions. She points out the absurdities of the original (naming a kid after an article of clothing? Kid can't tell the difference between her own grandmother and an animal?), leaving me rolling with laughter. Usually I skip author's notes, but for some reason I decided to read this one. Piece of advice? Read it! If you're at all unfamiliar with the story, or just need a refresher on the details, she does an excellent job summarizing it. More importantly, the author's note is laugh out loud funny!

Each story follows a different character in the original story: the grandmother, Little Red, the woodcutter, Little Red's mother, the wolf, and even the Red Riding Hood. Sometimes Little Red is bratty, sometimes she's nice, sometimes granny is a victim, and sometimes she is something quite different. Some of the stories are sweet, some are horrifying, but all showcase VVV's wry humor. The real triumph of these stories is that each is unique and I never felt like I was reading the same story over and over again.

While all these stories share a common theme, they are each separate and self-contained so you can easily pick the book up, read a story, and then read something else in between. The whole book is pretty short and can be read in about an hour or two. I do recommend this book to fans of fractured fairy tales or someone looking for a laugh.

Nancy says

Little Red Riding Hood is one of the silliest fairy tales out there- seriously the girl (who doesn't even have a name!) has no common sense. So these short stories are rather thin being based off the original source material. The best of the bunch was "Deems the Wood Gatherer" who bumbled around the enchanted woods making things worse for the three little pigs, LRRH, the Gingerbread Man & Hansel and Gretel. A very fast read, so no harm done.

Joan says

Since Vande Velde starts by complaining about the red riding hood story specifically how really stupid Red is, it bothered me that in her 8 alternative stories Red was often stupid!

Brittany says

Think you know the story of Little Red Riding Hood? Think again. Vivian Vande Velde decided to retell it, eight different ways. In each story you will have a chance to see Red and the other characters in a different light. Make sure you brush up on your other fairy tales too, since some of them make a guest appearance woven deftly into each tale.

I really enjoyed this eight story collection from the mighty VVV. Each tale was imaginative and full of new twists and turns for an already magnificent tale. I love the story of Little Red Riding Hood, even if she does

have a terrible name and is quite daft. Each of these stories were amusing and really delved into character history for all the people in the original. I was very excited to see some cross-pollination of other fairy tales into the story of Red. The Grimm Brothers even make an appearance. If you are a fan of fairy tales I would certainly pick up this book. It is gold from beginning to end. I recommend that you read the Author's Note at the front of the novel, it was very humorous. There is not much more to say about this, because I don't want to ruin a single moment of the storytelling for you, but really if you liked the tale of Red you should pick this up as soon as possible.

First Line:

"Everyone knows the story of Little Red Riding Hood, the girl with the unfortunate name and the inability to tell the difference between her grandmother and a member of a different species."

Favorite Lines:

"Of course, this leaves us with the question: If Granny were alive and well in the closet, why didn't she say anything when her granddaughter was struggling with the difference between a beast of the forest and a family member? You know, something to end Little Red's confusion. Perhaps something like: 'RUN, YOU LITTLE DIPSTICK, BEFORE HE EATS YOU!'"

Miriam says

This book got my back up from the start, by opening with an introduction that made fun of the Red Riding Hood story in particularly lame and stupid ways. First of all, don't try to be funny if you don't know how (thinking about the VVV books I've read, humor is a weak point for her). Second, isn't it some kind of party foul to make fun of the very thing you are ripping off to sell your not-very-good short stories? Because most of the stories here were pretty weak. The couple that were better really aren't related to Red Riding Hood and felt like she stuck in a couple extraneous details to make them marginally relevant. Overall it felt like she had one Red Riding Hood-inspired story and decided to throw together some other discarded writing to make a collection just so she could have a book to take advantage of the current popularity of this subgenre of YA. Thumbs down.

Lorena says

This book started out bad for me – with an author's note in which she makes fun of the original Grimm's Little Red Riding Hood.

Everyone knows the story of Little Red Riding Hood, the **girl with the unfortunate name and the inability to tell the difference between her grandmother and a member of a different species.**

The question is: Why do we all know it?

If you look at "Little Red Riding Hood," it's a perfect example of the exact opposite of a good story.

Now I accept that everyone's tastes are different, and it's obvious that Ms. Vande Velde does not hold Little Red Riding Hood in high regard ("a strange and disturbing story that should not be shared with children"). Which is fine. But by stating, in the beginning of her book, that the original tale is "not a good story" she does alienate those who actually like the Grimm's tale. **I don't know if it was a weak attempt at humor or**

if she thought that stating her opinion as a fact was a good way to begin a retelling.

I didn't like the eight new versions in Cloaked in Red. There was nothing inherently wrong with them, they were nothing special, nor were they anywhere close to being better than the original. They just fell flat. While the stories are all a retelling, they just **take the superficial things** from the original story (i.e. the red cloak, grandmother, wolf etc.), but nothing deeper, nothing meaningful.

So whether or not the original Little Red Riding Hood is good or not is subjective. No question, but what it does have, **is a deeper meaning**. There are all kinds of versions out there about what the story warns about. One can analyze for hours about whom the wolf stands for and why Little Red Riding Hood didn't recognize him as a danger when he was pretending to be her grandmother.

The eight versions in Cloaked in Red however don't have any deeper meaning to them, **there is no hidden debth** to them, and **nothing to make one think more about**.

They are just that. Eight stories. 1.5 stars

Skedatt says

To tell you truthfully, I had read the Rumpelstiltskin Problem a long time ago and remembered that the last version of the story was really funny. I was hoping to find the same true here. Which, some of them were. I really enjoyed the retelling having the grandmother be a werewolf. The image of having a wolf rifle through her closet trying to find four matching shoes makes me smile. The doll coming to life is probably my least favorite. The stories are worth reading in that they don't take very long and have a lot of different perspectives that are really fun to read.

Now for the premise of the book: Vivian Vande Velde says she wrote the book to explain away the lack of character development and plot holes in the Red-Ridinghood story. Instead of telling us the historical context of the story and some of the interpretations thereof, she rails on it for its lack of modernity.

I have problems with fairy tales being judged by today's standard of story writing. To take a folktale/fairytale/myth and rip it apart talking about the motivations of the characters, etc., is a bit excessive. That is why there are so many re-tellings out there on the market. They take the story with all of its perceived faults and then fleshes it out for the modern reader. A modern reader, who can read in the first place and can afford to be more concerned about the literary merits of a story than about whether or not their family will survive the winter or die of some strange malady or the next invasion by bandits and/or armies.

And that doesn't even bring up (though I just have) the merits of these stories as teaching tales with a moral (which you may or may not agree with) in their historical context.

I am glad for the retellings of such tales; I like quite a few of them, but don't get on your proverbial high horse about plot holes without explaining where the folktale/fairytale/myth came from. But that is the historian in me talking, I suppose, not the editor wielding a red pen of doom.
